

First Things First
Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council

Governance Policy Manual

P R E F A C E

This document, initially adopted by the Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council on June 3, 2008, and updated periodically thereafter, constitutes the complete and official body of policies for the governance and operation of the Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council.

DISCLAIMER

ALL POLICIES FOUND IN THIS GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME AS APPROVED BY THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL. THE FIRST THINGS FIRST REGIONAL OFFICE DISSEMINATES HARD COPIES OF ADDITIONS/REVISIONS NOT MORE THAN TWICE EACH YEAR. THE WEB COPY, LOCATED AT [HTTP://WWW.AZFTF.GOV](http://www.azftf.gov) IS UPDATED AS NEEDED FOLLOWING APPROVAL BY THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL. PRIOR TO ACTING IN RELIANCE UPON A SPECIFIC REGIONAL COUNCIL POLICY AS IT APPEARS IN ANY COPY OF THE GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL, PLEASE CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HAS NOT RECENTLY APPROVED ANY ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO THAT SPECIFIC POLICY.

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1-101 Organization, Authority and Location

The Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council is established as a result of a ballot initiative, Proposition 203, which was approved by voters in November 2006. The purpose, authority, powers and duties of the Regional Partnership Council are included in A.R.S. Title 8, Chapter 13 as well as in other statutes and laws of the State of Arizona. The Regional Partnership Council is appointed by the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board and assisted in the performance of its duties by staff employees known as the First Things First Staff. The Cocopah Regional Office is located in Yuma, Arizona. The office is maintained by the Regional Staff.

Adopted [June 3, 2008]

1-102 Departure from Regional Partnership Council Policy

- A. Persons desiring to depart from the policies adopted by the Regional Partnership Council shall submit a request in writing to the Chairperson of the Regional Partnership Council.
- B. No departure from Regional Partnership Council policy shall be permitted without the approval of the Regional Partnership Council.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-103 Meetings of the Regional Partnership Council

The Regional Partnership Council shall adopt a calendar of regular meetings of the Regional Partnership Council prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. The Chairperson or any four members of the Regional Partnership Council may at any time call a special meeting of the Regional Partnership Council.

A majority of the membership of the Regional Partnership Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Regional Partnership Council, but a number less than a quorum may adjourn from time to time. Regional Partnership Council members may participate at any meeting in person, by teleconference and or by videoconference provided that all members may hear one another.

Public notice of all meetings of the Regional Partnership Council shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of law. In addition, written notice shall be provided to each member of the Regional Partnership Council. All notices required by this policy shall at least specify the time, date and place of the meeting.

Written notice of any regular meeting of the Regional Partnership Council, plus the agenda and all material relating to agenda items, shall be transmitted to each member of the Regional Partnership Council at each member's last known place of residence or other designated address or email address by the quickest and most reliable method at least five days prior to the date of such meeting. Amendments to the agenda and additional supporting materials, not previously available, shall be transmitted at least three days prior to the scheduled meeting. Except with the approval of three-fourths of the voting members in attendance at a meeting, and if permitted by law, no action shall be taken by the Regional Partnership Council on any matter where material is not timely submitted in accordance with this policy.

Special meetings may be held upon such notice to the members of the Regional Partnership Council as is appropriate to the circumstances and upon such public notice as is required by law. Special meetings may be held by teleconference and or videoconference. All material relating to special meeting agenda items shall be transmitted to each member of the Regional Partnership Council as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-104 Meeting Procedures

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (available online at <http://www.rulesonline.com/>) shall govern the deliberations of the Regional Partnership Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Regional Partnership Council policies and special rules of order the Regional Partnership Council may adopt, and with any applicable statutes.

The order of business for any regular meeting of the Regional Partnership Council shall be in accordance with the written agenda prepared for the meeting. Such agenda shall provide for both an executive session and open session in accordance with requirements of law. The open session portion of the agenda shall provide at least for the following:

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes of prior regular or special meetings if not included on consent agenda
3. Adoption of all consent agenda items
4. Matters presented by the chairs of standing committees of the Regional Partnership Council
5. Reports, if any, from ad hoc or special committees appointed by the Regional Partnership Council
6. Matters presented by the First Things First Regional Director
7. Announcements and adjournment

Routine matters listed in the open session portion of the agenda for a regular meeting of the Regional Partnership Council may be grouped together and decided by the Regional Partnership Council without discussion or debate. Such matters shall be designated as "Consent Agenda Items." Any member of the Regional Partnership Council may request discussion or debate on any individual item listed as a Consent Agenda Item, and the matter shall be considered and decided separately at such time in the meeting as may be directed by the Regional Partnership Council Chairperson.

During the course of any regular meeting of the Regional Partnership Council, the Chairperson shall act as presiding officer and all motions shall be directed to the Chairperson. However, the Chairperson may delegate to the chair of each respective standing committee the responsibility for chairing discussion of items presented to the Regional Partnership Council by that chairperson. Whenever a matter before the Regional Partnership Council is deferred for further discussion, the Chairperson may assign the matter to an appropriate committee, schedule the matter for further consideration at a future meeting of the Regional Partnership Council, or take other appropriate action, and may otherwise direct the Regional Staff with respect to the matter.

All meetings of the Regional Partnership Council are open to the public except for executive sessions. The Regional Partnership Council reserves the right, however, to maintain order to prevent interference by any member or members of the public with the conduct of its meetings.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-105 Call to the Public Procedure

The Cocopah Regional Partnership Council may conduct a “Call to the Public” when members of the public may address the Regional Partnership Council during a meeting of the Regional Partnership Council. Speakers who wish to address the Regional Partnership Council:

- Must turn in a signed request (using the form provided at the Regional Partnership Council meeting) to the Regional Director. Any written materials for the Regional Partnership Council should be included with this request.
- Are given up to five minutes to make their remarks.

The following priority will be given to speakers during “Call to the Public”:

1. Matters scheduled on the same meeting’s agenda.
2. Other matters; presenters who haven’t addressed the Regional Partnership Council in the previous two months.
3. Other matters: presenters who have addressed the Regional Partnership Council in the previous two months.

The Regional Partnership Council retains its prerogative to:

- Refuse to hear comments on a specific issue if a public comment session has been held on the issue.
- Limit the time or the number of speakers on the same issue.
- Refuse to have letters read *on behalf of other individuals*.

If speakers have comments that are too long for the time allowed, or if members of the public would like materials distributed to the Regional Partnership Council, written materials may be provided to the Regional Director. All written materials are distributed to and given consideration by the Regional Partnership Council.

Because of the diversity of issues presented during “Call to the Public,” Regional Partnership Council members generally do not respond to speakers during this comment period. The speaker’s concerns are recorded and may be referred to the appropriate staff for follow-up. The Regional Partnership Council is informed of the outcomes of the staff efforts to respond to the speaker’s concerns.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-106 Minutes of Meetings of the Regional Partnership Council

Minutes of all meetings of the Regional Partnership Council shall be created and maintained in accordance with the requirements of law. The Regional Partnership Council may incorporate by reference into its minutes lists of staff changes, reports, lists of budget information, formal written resolutions and other material of similar import, and such material shall be maintained in a permanent file to be designated as the "Cocopah Regional Partnership Council's Documents File," which shall be kept in the custody of the Regional Director and available for ready reference.

Each member of the Regional Partnership Council shall be furnished with copies of the minutes of the open session portion of each regular and special meeting of the Regional Partnership Council. Members of the Regional Partnership Council shall be furnished with copies of the minutes of the executive session portion of any meeting of the Regional Partnership Council for the purpose of approving those minutes, after which all copies shall be returned to the Regional Director.

All minutes of the open session portion of any meeting of the Regional Partnership Council shall be open to public inspection during regular business hours at the First Things First Regional Office located in Yuma, AZ. Minutes of executive sessions shall be kept confidential except from members of the Regional Partnership Council or as otherwise required by law. Copies of minutes or excerpts from any minutes of the open session portion of any Regional Partnership Council meeting or from any executive session, if the law permits such disclosure, may be furnished by the Regional Director. If such minutes have not yet been approved by the Regional Partnership Council, they shall be marked "Draft."

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-107 Committees and Subcommittees

The Regional Partnership Council may establish and maintain standing committees composed of members of the Regional Partnership Council appointed by the Chairperson. The Chairperson will serve as an ex officio member of all standing committees.

Standing Committees may meet either apart from regular meetings of the Regional Partnership Council and provide a report to the Regional Partnership Council of business conducted, or may meet as a committee of the whole during the course of a regular Regional Partnership Council meeting. All members of the Regional Partnership Council attending a standing committee meeting are eligible for voting on standing committee matters.

The Chairperson of the Regional Partnership Council may establish such other ad hoc or special committees as the Chairperson deems necessary or advisable. The Chairperson shall appoint the membership of such committees, which may, but need not, include members of the Regional Partnership Council, and shall designate the matters to be considered by said committees. All such committees shall act as advisory bodies to the Regional Partnership Council and report their recommendations to the Regional Partnership Council.

All such standing, ad hoc or special committees shall hold and conduct their meetings in accordance with requirements of law. The chair of each such committee shall be its presiding officer and shall set the time, date and place of the meetings.

The Executive Committee shall be a standing committee of the Regional Partnership Council. Its members shall include the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and the chairs of any other Standing Committees established by the Regional Partnership Council. Unless otherwise directed by the Chairperson, the Chairperson will preside over the Executive Committee. If the law permits, the Regional Partnership Council may delegate a specific decision-making authority to the Executive Committee from time to time. In addition, if a matter is deemed to be urgent by the Chairperson, the Executive Committee may be convened for specific decision-making, subject to adoption at a subsequent regular meeting of the Regional Partnership Council.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-108 Regional Partnership Council Officers and Their Duties

At the first regular meeting of the Regional Partnership Council following May 1 of each fiscal year beginning in 2008, the Regional Partnership Council shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from among the appointed members to serve for the ensuing fiscal year beginning July 1, who shall hold office for twelve months and until successors are duly elected. The election procedure shall be determined by the Regional Partnership Council.

In the absence of good reason to the contrary, it shall be the Policy of the Regional Partnership Council, in nominating members to serve as its Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, to nominate members who have previously served as a member of the executive committee to help ensure greater past experience on the Regional Partnership Council. Notwithstanding the previously stated preference for experience, the Regional Partnership Council may nominate any appointed member for its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. A majority vote of the appointed members of the Regional Partnership Council shall be required to elect.

It shall be the duty of the Chairperson to preside over the meetings of the Regional Partnership Council, to call meetings as herein provided, to serve as an ex officio member of all committees of the Regional Partnership Council, and to perform such other duties as are set forth in these policies or as shall be vested in the Chairperson.

It shall be the duty of the Vice-Chairperson to assume the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson does not automatically succeed the Chairperson. Both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are eligible for reelection.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-109 Communications To or From the Regional Partnership Council

Communications from the Regional Partnership Council to members of the legislature, the press and the public should, whenever possible, be transmitted by and through the Chairperson of the Regional Partnership Council. Inquiries in regard to matters upon which the Regional Partnership Council has taken, or probably will take a position, should be referred to the Chairperson.

There will be cases when an individual member of the Regional Partnership Council will feel obligated to answer inquiries. In these cases, the member of the Regional Partnership Council expressing an opinion as to matters upon which the Regional Partnership Council has taken a position should support the position taken by the Regional Partnership Council or make it perfectly clear that he or she is expressing an opinion that has not been approved by the Regional Partnership Council.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-110 Lobbying

The Regional Partnership Council recognizes and appreciates the privilege each individual in this State and Nation has to express his or her opinion and to seek to make that opinion known to members of Congress, and State legislature. The Regional Partnership Council also recognizes the responsibilities with which it has been entrusted in connection with the operation of the early childhood development and health system and the advancement of early childhood development and health programs in the State of Arizona and recognizes that on occasion the interests of the Regional Partnership Council will not coincide with the interests of individual members of the Regional Partnership Council.

In approaching members of the State legislature or members of Congress, members of the Regional Partnership Council shall make every effort to indicate clearly that the position they take is an individual position or is the position of a group other than the Regional Partnership Council. In instances in which the Regional Partnership Council has taken an official position, the member endorsing a differing position shall make it clear to the legislative body that the Regional Partnership Council has endorsed a different or contrary position.

The members responsible for the disbursement or allocation of State funds shall determine prior to disbursement or allocation that such funds will not be used for purposes of influencing legislation unless such use receives specific authorization by the Regional Partnership Council.

Only the Chairperson of the Regional Partnership Council or his or her designated delegate shall speak for the Regional Partnership Council to members of the legislature in matters relating to policy. In responding to members of congress or State legislators, Regional Partnership Council members shall make every effort to accurately communicate official Regional Partnership Council positions. In matters for which the Regional Partnership Council hasn't taken an official position, Regional Partnership Council members should indicate clearly that the position they take is an individual position or is the position of a group other than the Regional Partnership Council.

This policy is not intended to nor shall it be enforced so as to restrict rights guaranteed to individual employees or Regional Partnership Council members but is an attempt only to separate the views of those individuals from positions which the Regional Partnership Council may take in attempting to discharge its responsibilities under the statutes of the State of Arizona.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-111 Conflict Of Interest

Regional Partnership Council members and employees shall comply with the conflict of interest provisions of A.R.S. Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 8. These statutes set the minimum standards expected of public officers and employees who, in their official capacities, are faced with a decision or contract that might affect their direct or indirect pecuniary or proprietary interests or those of a relative. Section 38-503 provides in part:

Any public officer or employee of a public agency who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any contract, sale, purchase or service to such public agency shall make known that interest in the official records of such public agency and shall refrain from voting upon or otherwise participating in any manner as an officer or employee in such contract, sale, purchase or service.

Any public officer or employee who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any decision of a public agency shall make known such interest in the official records of such public agency and shall refrain from participating in any manner as an officer or employee in such decision.

Under this law, a Regional Partnership Council member or employee who has a conflict of interest must disclose the interest and refrain from participating in the matter. Regional Partnership Council members and employees may find guidance on this subject in the Arizona Agency Handbook, which is available on the Attorney General's website at http://www.azag.gov/Agency_Handbook/Agency_Handbook.html. Public officers and employees should review conflicts of interest matters not specifically addressed in the Handbook with their supervisors or legal counsel.

In addition to complying with the conflict of interest provisions of Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 8, no Regional Partnership Council member shall vote on, or participate in the discussion of, any grant proposal in which any entity by which they are employed or on whose Regional Partnership Council they serve has a substantial interest, as defined by Section 38-502.

Furthermore, in accordance with A.R.S. Section 8-1191(C)(5), Regional Partnership Council members are specifically prohibited from having a substantial interest in the provision of early childhood education services as defined by Section 38-502.

In addition to complying with the conflict of interest provisions of Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 8, all Regional Partnership Council members shall complete a Conflict of Interest Statement upon adoption of this policy and annually thereafter on a form to be provided by First Things First. These forms will be reviewed by the Regional Director and First Things First legal counsel for resolution or mitigation of potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest that cannot be resolved or mitigated satisfactorily will be placed on the Regional Partnership Council's upcoming agenda for disclosure purposes and to help ensure compliance with the conflict of interest laws. In addition, the Regional Director will prepare a summary report of the Conflict of Interest Statements filed each year for Regional Council review.

The Conflict of Interest Statement prepared annually by the Regional Director will be reviewed by the Regional Partnership Council.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-112 Amendments

These policies shall not be added to, amended, or repealed except at a meeting of the Regional Partnership Council and by public vote of a majority of all voting members of the Regional Partnership Council. Any proposed addition, deletion, or amendment shall be filed with the Regional Director, in writing, at least ten days before such meeting, and it shall be the duty of the Regional Director to promptly distribute a copy to each member of the Regional Partnership Council.

Amendments to Regional Partnership Council policy will require a two-step process to adopt: 1) the draft policy change will receive a *first reading* at a public meeting, during which Regional Partnership Council members may discuss the draft amendment and request that staff make changes as deemed appropriate (a vote to adopt is not taken at this stage) and 2) the draft policy change will receive a *second reading* at a subsequent public meeting during which the Regional Partnership Council may direct staff to make further changes or may vote its adoption.

Adopted June 3, 2008

1-113 Attendance

This policy is intended to support the full contribution of all Regional Partnership Council members. A member missing any Regional Partnership Council meeting shall contact the Regional Director to give advanced notice. An attendance problem shall be defined, per the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Policy on Regional Council Attendance, as:

- A member who has two consecutive unexcused absences
- A member has three consecutive absences
- A member who misses more than three meetings without excuse in a 12-month period
- A member who has more than five absences in a 12-month period

An excused absence occurs when a member is unable to attend a meeting due to emergency, illness, injury, or with notification provided one week in advance to the Regional Director of a previously scheduled travel or work or family obligation, which prevents participation at a meeting either in person or by phone.

In the event of an attendance problem, the chair will contact the member to discuss the problem. The chair will issue up to three letters notifying the member of the attendance problem, the intent of the Regional Partnership Council, and requesting a response from the member. The member's response will be shared by the chair with the full Regional Partnership Council at the next Regional Partnership Council meeting. At that meeting, the Regional Partnership Council will decide what action to take regarding the member's future membership.

In accordance with A.R.S. Section 8-1162(D), a member who misses more than three meetings without excuse or resigns their membership shall be replaced by the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board after a public application process and with the input of the Regional Partnership Council.

Adopted July 1, 2009

Revised May 9, 2011